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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SOURCE

Kuang-ming Jih-pao."I" TRIBE IN SIKANG WELCOMES CCF

Chungking, 16 April (Hsin-hua) -- During the campaign for the capture of Hsi-ch'ang, Sikang Province, the "I" tribe people, who live in the mountainous regions of Sikang, assisted the People's Liberation Army as guides and spread the news of their arrival. After the liberation of Hsi-ch'ang, they voluntarily supplied food to the soldiers and turned in firearms hidden or abandoned by the defeated KMT troops, as well as stragglers from the latter's forces.

One day, the "I" people from the Pai-Sha area north of Hsi-ch'ang brought chickens and sheep into Hsi-ch'ang and in halting Chinese said, "The PLA are friendly just like the Red Army [of the Great Trek of 1935]." The "I" people pointed to the insignia on the hats of the CCF soldiers and said, "We also want to wear those," signifying that they were ready to join the CCF forces. The PLA entertained them with wine and took photographs as souvenirs of their visit. After they had gone away, another group from the mountains to the north brought in 54 of Gen Hu Tsung-nan's soldiers and reported the hidden locations of eight 60-millimeter mortars, four heavy machine guns, and five carbines.

On 31 March 1950, "I" people from the village of Hsin-ts'un, 50 li north of Hsi-ch'ang, aided the PLA in defeating 400 men of the KMT First Division, commanded by Chu Kuang-tsu. Of this division 234 were captured alive. The "I" people are allowed to circulate freely in Hsi-ch'ang. They will never again be subjected to the exploitation and cruel treatment of the former KMT bandits; and it may be asserted that with the liberation of Hsi-ch'ang by the PLA, good fortune has come to the "I" people of Sikang.

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